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Coghlan K. (2019). Collaboration and Innovation: NNLM'S Nationwide Online Wikipedia Edit-a-Thon: Lightning Presentation. NAHSL Conference Proceedings. <https://doi.org/10.13028/3csj-ne59>. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/naahsl-proceedings/2018/proceedings/4>

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COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION: NNLM'S NATIONWIDE ONLINE WIKIPEDIA EDIT-A-THON: LIGHTNING PRESENTATION

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North Atlantic Health Sciences Libraries Annual Meeting
October 28-30, 2018
Manchester, New Hampshire, USA

ABSTRACT

There is a growing trend of libraries engaging their communities with information and open data by holding Wikipedia “edit-a-thons.” During the events, participants learn about the culture and norms of this widely used online resource by doing hands-on editing of articles, improving citations and adding new facts. The National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM) held a health-focused edit-a-thon utilizing librarians’ research skills towards making Wikipedia a better and evidence-based resource in promoting NLM resources. Participants were able to view a customized training from Dr. James Hellman of WikiProject Medicine prior to the one-day event. On April 17, 2018 during the network wide online edit-a-thon, participants received online support from NNLM staff throughout the 12-hour event across the nation. At the end of the day, more than 700 edits were done in 111 articles focused on rare diseases. NNLM is planning similar events in the future. This presentation will outline the planning process, marketing strategy, event details, evaluation, and future vision for this project.

BACKGROUND/ INTRODUCTION

The National Library of Medicine (NLM) coordinates a 6800-member National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM) that promotes and provides access to health information in communities across the United States. The mission of the NNLM is to advance the progress of medicine and improve the public health by providing all U.S. health professionals with equal access to biomedical information and improving the public's access to information to enable them to make informed decisions about their health. The purpose of this conference proceeding is to report on the NNLM’s health-focused online edit-a-thon, which took place on April 17, 2018. The event utilized librarians’ research skills to make Wikipedia a better and more evidence-based resource by using NLM databases to edit content and citations. The project idea arose out of the NLM Strategic Plan’s stated goal: to “reach more people in more ways through enhanced dissemination and engagement pathways.” The project objectives were to improve the use of NLM resources, engage NNLM members, utilize librarian research skills and make Wikipedia a better evidence-based resource.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

The network-wide online Wikipedia Edit-a-thon took place on April 17, 2018 from 9am-9pm ET. A five-step process was used to plan this project: research problem; topic selection; identify resources to be utilized; training; and finally editing. First research was done to define the problem. A brief literature scan determined that large number of medical students use Google and Wikipedia for health information. Second, we picked a topic. By talking with the Wikipedia medical community, we found out there was a significant need for improvement of rare disease articles. The third step involved identifying pertinent information. Since the original intent was to make Wikipedia a better and more evidence-based resource by using NLM resources to edit content and citations we knew databases such as PubMed, Genetics Home Reference, Medline Plus would be relevant as well as the National Institute of Health’s Genetic and Rare Diseases

Information Center (GARD). The fourth step was training. Prior to the event, participants were able to view an online training from Dr. James Hellman of WikiProject Medicine. In addition, participants were encouraged to create a Wikipedia account and register their username on the NNLM Dashboard. The final step was editing, on the day of the event, participants were invited to join NNLM's WebEx session to receive online support from NNLM staff and engage with other editors. Librarians from the Regional Medical Libraries of the Southeastern Atlantic Region (SEA), Mid-Atlantic Region (MAR), South Central Region (SCR), New England Region (NER), and Mid-Continental Region (MCR) took turns acting as virtual instructors. Each 2-hour session began with a pre-recorded video from the National Network Coordinating Office (NNCO). The instructors demonstrated how to edit Wikipedia articles, described NLM resources, and interacted with participants in the WebEx chatroom. The final timeslot featured OCLC Wikipedian-in-Residence Monika Sengul-Jones. The #CiteNLM2018 hashtag assisted with collecting information about edits and social media activity.

REFLECTIONS

The NNLM Wikipedia Dashboard content includes edit-a-thon statistics, event information, WebEx details and schedule, citation editing basics, links to NLM resources, and a timeline. According to statistics from the NNLM Dashboard: Thirty-two (32) editors edited articles. There were seven (7) new articles created. During the edit-a-thon, one hundred and eleven (111) articles were edited. In total, 736 total edits were made, and 43.5K words were added. However, only participants who registered on the NNLM dashboard were captured in the dashboard statistics. As of October 31, 2018, the original training video recording was viewed two hundred and forty-two (242) times on YouTube. Unexpectedly, fewer people joined the WebEx sessions approximately 1-2 non NNLM staff member per session and participants were mainly from the library community. The Twitter feed showed some user engagement, but the majority was from NNLM staff.

BEST PRACTICES

A five-step process was used to plan this project: research problem; topic selection; resource identification; training; and editing. All five steps were utilized in this project. The NNLM Wikipedia Dashboard was found to be an effective method to contain and confer event information such as editing statistics, WebEx room details and schedule, citation editing basics, links to NLM resources, and a timeline (<https://nnlm.gov/wiki>).

LESSONS LEARNED

The first NNLM Wikipedia Edit-a-thon was an overall success, but there are several opportunities for improvement as we plan our Fall Edit-a-thon. Since only participants who registered on the NNLM Dashboard were captured in the dashboard statistics, there may have been more participation than was counted. There may be a better way to track participation,

possibly by emphasizing the importance of editors including #citenlm2018 in their Wikipedia edit summary. While most sessions included one host, it was determined that having two hosts in each WebEx session was helpful and increased participant engagement. In addition, the second host could help with monitoring the chat box, twitter feed and decrease dead air time by filling in. Fewer people than expected joined the WebEx sessions and there was limited social media engagement. The Edit-a-thon was not widely marketed, and news of the event mostly reached the health sciences librarian community.

CONCLUSIONS

The first NNLM Wikipedia Edit-a-thon was an overall success, with many teachable moments and several opportunities for improvement as we plan our Fall Edit-a-thon. The next Edit-a-thon will take place on November 7, 2018. Each session in the Fall Edit-a-thon will include two hosts, one NNLM staff member and one volunteer network member. The Edit-a-thon has been featured on the NLM in Focus blog and been the subject of presentations at the National Information Standards Organization (NISO) conference as well as the National Federation of Advanced Information Services (NFAIS) conference. The next Edit-a-thon will be promoted during MLA chapter meetings, on Twitter and Facebook, and through Network communication. Instead of one training session, there will be three smaller live training sessions that will also be recorded focusing on different aspects of the project throughout the month of October. In addition, a handout describing how to access the Wikipedia dashboard, the NNLM WebEx room, and women's health resources will be e-mailed to registered participants of the classes. The enhanced marketing and promotion of the Fall NNLM Edit-a-thon should lead to increased visibility of the project and more participation.

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APPENDIX 1

PDF of slides